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James D. Hart

FINE PRINTERS OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

An Interview Conducted by

Ruth Teiser

Berkeley
1969

James D. Hart

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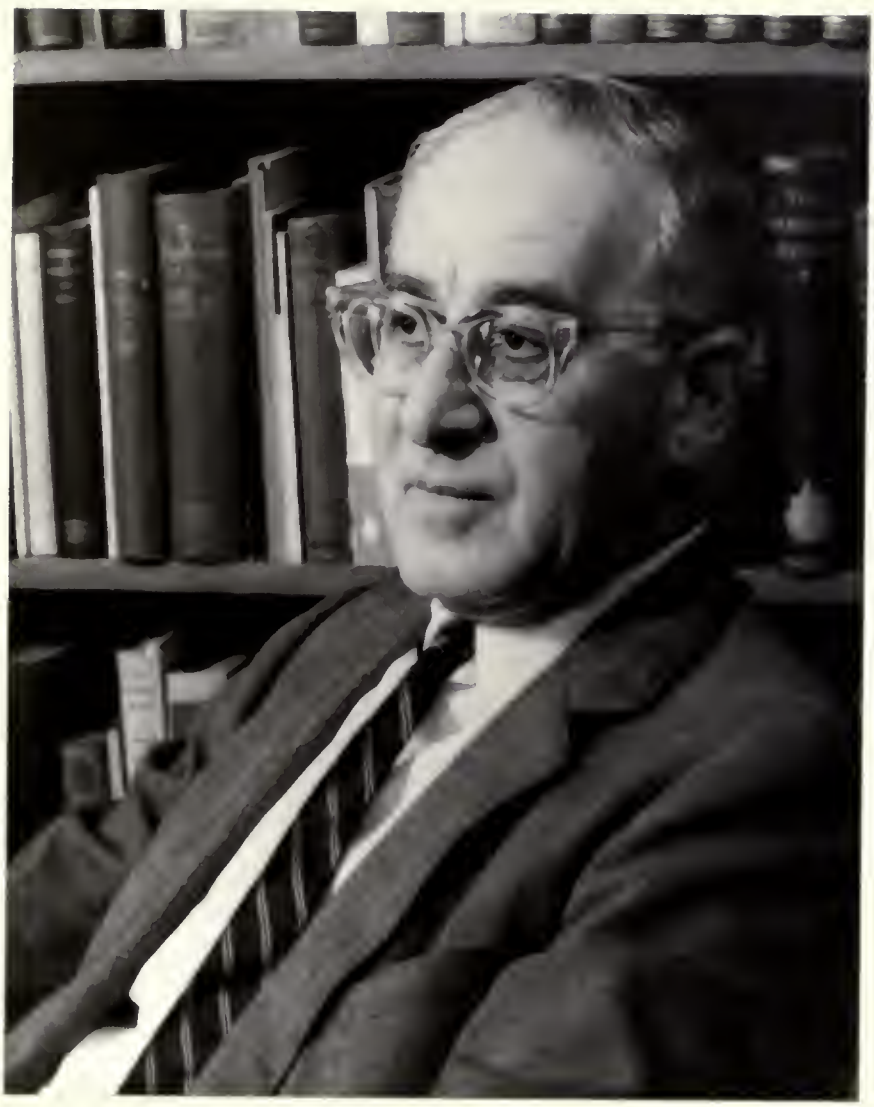

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Books and Printing in the San Francisco Bay Area

Interviews Completed by December, 1969

Lewis and Dorothy Allen, Book Printing with The Handpress

Brother Antoninus, Brother Antoninus: Poet, Printer, and Religious

Mallette Dean, Artist and Printer

Edwin Grabhorn, Recollections of the Grabhorn Press

Jane Grabhorn, The Colt Press

Robert Grabhorn, Fine Printing and the Grabhorn Press

James D. Hart, Fine Printers of the San Francisco Bay Area

Warren R. Howell, Two San Francisco Bookmen

Haywood Hunt, Recollections of San Francisco Printers

Lawton Kennedy, A Life In Printing

Oscar Lewis, Literary San Francisco

David Magee, Bookselling and Creating Books

Walter Mann, Photoengraving

Bernhard Schmidt, Herman Diedrichs, Max Schmidt, Jr., The Schmidt Lithograph Company, Vol. I

Lorenz Schmidt, Ernest Wuthman, Steward Norris, The Schmidt Lithograph Company, Vol. II

Albert Sperisen, San Francisco Printers, 1925-1965

Jack W. Stauffacher, A Printed Word Has Its Own Measure

Edward DeWitt Taylor, supplement to interview with Francis Farquhar

Adrian Wilson, Printing and Book Designing

INTRODUCTION

James D. Hart has been an observer of fine printing in the San Francisco Bay Area for more than forty years, and a frequent participant as an amateur printer and advisor. His interest in printing, nurtured by the San Francisco milieu, began when, as a high school senior, he came to know the Grabhorn Press. It grew during his undergraduate years at Stanford University, where he undertook ventures in printing and publishing. It was resumed after his years of graduate study at Harvard College when he returned to California and joined the faculty of the University of California at Berkeley. It has continued since, concurrent with his academic and administrative career.

Dr. Hart's interest in printing is, of course, inseparable from his authoritative knowledge of American and English literature. The combination is clearly reflected in the literary and historical quality of the material he has chosen to print. An illuminating comment upon his printing and a checklist of works that had come from his presses through 1962 appeared in The Book Club of California Quarterly News-Letter of Winter, 1963: "The Christmas Printer," by Jane Wilson.

The Book Club has gained by the participation of Dr. Hart; he has served as president, and for many years as chairman of its publications committee. He has also been an active member of The Roxburghe Club of San Francisco, and to its members and

other groups he has frequently given lectures relating to printers and printing. The address on Edwin Grabhorn and the Grabhorn Press, the text of which is included here as Appendix II, was given at the opening of a memorial exhibition at the San Francisco Public Library on April 24, 1969. It was later printed, with some changes, by the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library.

Another address that should be noted in relation to this interview is Dr. Hart's Fine Printing in California, delivered at the California Library Association annual conference in 1959, and published by the Association the following year as the first in its keepsake series.

Dr. Hart has long been interested in oral history. He was an instigator of the oral history program of the University of California at Berkeley, and has served as advisor to the Regional Oral History Office for interviews with writers and for the fine printing series of which this interview is a part. Dr. Hart was interviewed on a Saturday afternoon, May 3, 1969, in the combined study and print shop at his home in Berkeley.

Ruth Teiser,
Interviewer

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DIRECTORY OF AMERICAN SCHOLARS
Volume II 1969 p. 228

HART, PROF JAMES D(AVID), b. San Francisco, Calif, Apr 18, 11, m 36, c 2 AMERICAN LITERATURE A B, Stanford Univ, 32, A M, Harvard, 33, Ph D, 36 Instr ENG, UNIV CALIF, BERKELEY, 36-41, asst prof, 41-47, assoc prof, 47-51, PROF, 51-, CHMN, DEPT, 65-, v.chmn. dept, 49-55, chmn, 55-57, v.chancellor, 57-60, acting dir. Bancroft Libr, 61-62. Comdr, Order Brit. Empire, 63. Off Strategic Serv, 42-45. MLA. Bibliog. Soc.-Am, Philol. Assn. Pac. Coast, Am. Acad. Arts & Sci. American literature, literature and history of the western United States. Publ: Oxford companion to American literature, Oxford, 41, rev ed, 48, 56 & 65; Popular book, Oxford, 50 & Univ. Calif, 61; America's literature, Holt, 55; American images of Spanish California, Bancroft Libr, Univ. Calif, 60; ed, From Scotland to Silverado, Harvard, 66. Add: 740 San Luis Rd, Berkeley, Calif. 94707.

EARLY INTEREST IN PRINTING

Teiser: I believe that Jane Wilson, in her Book Club Quarterly News-Letter article, "The Christmas Printer," wrote that you first became interested in printing when you were in high school.

Hart: That's right. I got interested in printing -- without knowing I was going to be getting interested in printing, I guess -- by virtue of the fact that I was editing the high school annual.

Teiser: What high school was it?

Hart: Menlo School. Somewhere -- I can't remember exactly where it was -- I had seen some of Valenti Angelo's drawings. I could have seen them in any number of places, I suppose, because Valenti had been already established for a year or two, I should think, by that time, doing work for the Grabhorns. And then of course he also did a lot of commercial work -- American Trust, Ransohoff ads and other things.

Well, anyway, somewhere I saw his work and was very impressed by it. I thought it would be wonderful

Hart: to have him since we had, as I recall, no boy who was particularly good at doing drawings. So I went to Valenti -- found out where he was located and went to see him. And it was he, rather than Ed and Bob Grabhorn, whom I went to see. I asked him to draw the full-page section headings for our high school yearbook. You know, for subjects like "Athletics," "Senior Class," and so on. He was agreeable to this, and so I worked with him at the Grabhorn Press on this matter. When I say I worked I mean I went in on a Friday or a Saturday, whenever it was, to talk about the layout and talk about the kind of illustrations I wanted and so on. And that brought me into contact with the press, and I very soon -- well, immediately, I guess -- like anyone else, was captivated by that press and what was being done by those two men, the Grabhorns. So that's how it really began. That would have been '28.

I was at school, so I couldn't be up at San Francisco except at vacation times and maybe on a late Friday afternoon. The annual was published around June or May, something of that sort. I had vacation then. Even though my job with Valenti was

Hart: done, I can remember distinctly coming to the press and hanging around, because I remember what happened to me, which seemed to me a very awkward affair. They'd go out for lunch and they'd let me stay there, and I started setting type without asking anybody's permission to do this. I had observed how Bob set type, or Jack Gannon or someone else, and so I suddenly picked up a stick and I started setting type for myself, just to teach myself something about it, I guess, because I was curious and interested. And I would distribute it before they came back so they'd be none the wiser, ostensibly. I didn't print anything, as I remember it. But one day they returned early, or something happened. At any rate, I was discovered at the case. And that, I think, was the real way I began any concern with printing. Both Bob and Ed were very kindly and showed me some things and let me have a hand in some relation to their printing that way.

Teiser: That's really one of their spontaneous kindnesses, isn't it?

Hart: Oh, yes. They were simply marvelous in the way in which they let everybody come in. They were very,

Hart: very open, very responsive to people.

Teiser: But they were pretty selective, were they not?

Hart: Oh, they could be crotchety. And there were certain kinds of people to whom they didn't feel simpatico. But they took in an awful lot of people, and there were a lot of young people who hung around the press to some greater or lesser degree. And then some of the people who worked there were very young.

I think about Jack Gannon, for example. Just a week ago, I had the privilege of giving a memorial talk about Ed Grabhorn at the San Francisco Public Library, and I mentioned Jack there, as I did so many of the other people whom I knew and who were associated with the Press. And I told the anecdote, which is representative of them [the Grabhorns] that a time came when they didn't really need Jack, and so Ed let Jack go in this curious way. He never really told anybody; he never fired anybody, to use that terminology. And Jack, who was quite a character himself, simply said "Yes," and turned up the next day at the press nevertheless, but not working, bringing along a book or something that he was reading, and he just hung around there. And

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*John Ira Gannon

**The text of this talk is given in Appendix I.

Hart: then lunchtime came and he went out for lunch with everybody and came back in the afternoon. He went on loafing around the Press. This went on for three or four days until Ed said, "Aw, Jack, you better come back to work."

Now, all these people floating around, on the edges somewhere or another, reading a book or talking -- it's amazing how they [Ed and Bob] got anything done with the way in which they were willing to have all kinds of people come in and talk. And there was always life going on in the Press, a lot of activity. One person might be busy or sort of floating off to talk to somebody else. Or Dr. [J. W.] Robertson would be there. There'd be all kinds of interesting characters.

Teiser: Dr. Robertson was Ed Grabhorn's father-in-law?

Hart: That's right, yes. He was a curious, interesting man, and terribly knowing and bound up in lots of things. His great passion at that time was Edgar Allan Poe, and that was of some interest to me. I recall talking with him about a variety of things and about Poe particularly. He was almost so fascinated as to be fanatical about subjects sometimes.

The doctor had several books printed by the

Hart: Grabhorn Press and I think that he even had a special colophon called the Russian Hill Press, as I remember.

Teiser: You went on to Stanford and carried with you this interest?

Hart: Yes. It developed much more keenly at Stanford. I didn't know at the time, I'm sure, but I felt that the life at Stanford, for the things I was interested in, just wasn't as vital as it might be. Or perhaps it was my fault that I didn't get into that which was vital, or that I just didn't discover things. It's true I got actively interested in the Daily and the Chaparral, which was a humor magazine, and so on. But there was no literary magazine that was very lively or vital, it seemed to me, so I decided that this was something that I wanted to get involved in. Somehow or other, rather gradually I guess, I just developed this little magazine called hesperian and designed it, and printed it at the Stanford Press. The first issue, it seems to me, had two articles by people whom I knew through the Grabhorn Press, Bob [Grabhorn] and Jack Gannon. The first issue looks to me, as you bring it to me now after all these years and I see it again, looks

Hart: to me pretty precious and a little backward looking.* The George Sterling checklist, which is bibliophilic, and some of those things are certainly backward looking for 1930. Yet the magazine does relate to my interest in printing. Valenti did the picture on the cover. As you observed, it is designed very much as a period piece with this business of lower case and certain other affectations. I can see, too, the use of a special kind of paragraph marker that I seem to have devised there. But you see there are no paragraph divisions; the type is set solid, and paragraphs are indicated by these little black circles.

Teiser: You didn't set the type?

Hart: No, I didn't set any type on that. I may have set the heads on it. I don't really remember. But I designed it, and I had it printed at the Stanford Press. And that's where I met Hartley Jackson, incidentally, through doing that magazine. The later issues (I've got some somewhere, and I guess Al Sperisen, who loaned you this, doesn't, or

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*A copy of the summer, 1930, issue of hesperian, the first issue of the publication, from the collection of Albert Sperisen, was brought to the interview.

Hart: he would have loaned you others and better ones, I believe) are somewhat of an improvement. The designing was quite a bit nicer.

Teiser: The Bancroft Library has some issues.

Hart: Well, I guess they picked them up at the time. They're very zealous in acquiring all kinds of oddities.

Teiser: It was very enterprising for an undergraduate to undertake such a thing.

Hart: Well, I don't know about that, but it was something I enjoyed playing around with.

Teiser: Where does that stand in time in relation to your printing with Herbert Reynolds?

Hart: Oh, this was about the same time. I think this was my sophomore year, if I remember correctly. Let's see, what's the date on this? Yes, 1930. And Herb and I did that little Mark Twain letter in 1930 also, if I remember correctly. Isn't that what Jane [Wilson] says? I'll trust her.

Teiser: I think she says 1929.*

Hart: '29, okay. That was part of the winter of '29,

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*Clemens, Samuel, A Letter From Mark Twain to his Publishers. (San Francisco): Penguin Press, 1929.

Hart: very likely. So it was a matter of a few months earlier I did that with Herb.

Herb was a little older than I. He must have been about a senior as I was a sophomore, something like that, I should guess. And Herb already had some association with a printing firm in San Francisco. I've forgotten its name, to tell you the truth.

What was Herb's class, do you have any idea?

Harroun: '28, I think.

Hart: '28? I have a feeling it must have been '29 somehow, although I don't like to dispute this. Only because I knew Herb at Stanford and I wasn't at Stanford until the fall of '28. But I did know he was ahead of me.

At any rate, Herb had a job in San Francisco at an engraving company, that, if my memory serves me, was located in the same building that Lawton Kennedy is now in, though I may be mistaken about that.

Teiser: 300 Broadway?

Hart: Yes, I think so.

Anyway, I was already collecting books and manuscripts and things, and the Mark Twain letter I thought was such a good letter that I decided I

Hart: wanted to print it. I somehow hooked up with Herb, who knew more about printing than I, and we did this up in San Francisco at that engraving place on their proof press. This was an ordinary kind of a cylinder proof press, as I remember, a little flat-bed press, you know, with a roller, for proofing cuts. We did about twenty, twenty-five copies, I should suppose. As I remember, it has an initial that Herb drew, I think, by cutting out a piece of celluloid, something like that, an initial "I," and then he ran red with a brush over it.

Teiser: I was wondering if it was hand colored.

Hart: It was hand colored, all right. Yes.

Teiser: It's a splendid initial.

Hart: Yes, it was very nice! I can't remember how the two of us worked together actually in the process of type setting and designing.

I think Herb and I were associated with only two productions. One, a little announcement, I think French fold, two pages, printed, with a woodcut done by Herb of a penguin, and then the explanation of the name of the Penguin Press. And then this Mark Twain pamphlet. I didn't do any more with Herb, nor do I think he did any more

Hart: printing. I may be wrong.

Teiser: There was a printed testimonial that hung in the Paul Shoups' living room, done when Mr. Shoup became president of Southern Pacific, printed by Herb Reynolds. Were you involved in printing that?

Hart: No. That's something I don't know.

Teiser: Your work with Reynolds was another step in your printing education, then?

Hart: I suppose so.

Teiser: In experimentation . . .

Hart: Yes, that's right.

PRINTING AND PUBLISHING AT STANFORD

Hart: Then actually the real activity in printing, so far as I am concerned, I think, began with the use of the Stanford Press, with a little aid from Hartley Jackson down there who was associated with the Press and with the Journalism Department, I believe.

Teiser: Could you tell a little about him?

Hart: Yes, I suppose I could. I accepted him as though he had always been at Stanford, you know, as an undergraduate, but I now know he hadn't been there long, nor did he remain so terribly long at Stanford, I think.

He was a hearty man with a certain swagger. I think that it covered a little uneasiness, to tell you the truth. He was a good looking man in his way, a little bit reminiscent of John Henry Nash, more handsome with his white hair, but not with that pomposity that one associates with Nash. He was much more outgoing. But he had a certain style in personality that reminds me a little bit of Nash. I think that as Nash swaggered a bit so did Jackson in his way, and I think maybe this concealed some things too. I don't think he was ever quite as easy as he might have been. But he was a

Hart: lovely man to me and to others.

Now Herb may indeed have had some association with him; I don't know. It may be indeed that I met Herb through him; I have no idea.

There was another fellow named Jim Nute, who runs a press in Palo Alto, a commercial venture.* And he was around the Stanford Press doing work under the aegis of Jackson as well.

Jackson really set off a lot of people, young and older as well, in bringing them a sense of good printing. Nathan Van Patten, who was the librarian at the time, he also used to get his fingers dirty a bit in the type and ink there at the press, and he and Jackson had together a press they called, I think, the Yerba Buena Press. The work was actually done there at the Stanford Press and I think predominantly, or almost exclusively, by Hartley Jackson. But Nathan Van Patten was the second person in the press, and they printed, I think, some things of Arthur Machen, for one. He was a great enthusiasm of Nathan Van Patten's, who was a man much given to certain kinds of coterie

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*The National Press.

Hart: enthusiasms.

Carl Wheat was also living down there in Palo Alto -- now Carl had no association whatsoever with the Stanford Press or Jackson -- but Carl had his own little Wheatstalk Press down in Palo Alto. Carl, with that hearty gregarious manner of his, did get all of those persons who were interested in, or were active, I should say, in printing, together at least once at his home for an evening. And I remember that there was a call to a meeting printed by Hartley Jackson at the Stanford Press. At that time among Jackson's enthusiasms was printing very, very small books, tiny little books. And he printed, I think it was Parson Weems' George Washington. He did a Night Before Christmas. And he also did this little call to a meeting of private press printers of the Palo Alto area, something like that. And there were several.

There was a man named Tuley Huntington, who was retired from some kind of a position -- I don't think a regular professorship by any means -- from the Department of English. And he had a press and did quite handsome little things too, in a curiously stylized fashion. Some of the texts he

Hart: chose seemed to me curious too. But the craftsmanship was very good.

So it was quite a little group. I think all of us must have been immediately or indirectly affected by the really great printers of San Francisco, you know, Grabhorn and Nash, Taylor and Taylor, and so on; even the Windsor Press of the Johnson brothers. But there was also this little group, this little knot, around Stanford that certainly was sparked to some substantial degree by Hartley Jackson. And I think that when I start talking with you about him I start being unfair to him, too.

There's something about Hartley Jackson, I don't know why, that causes people to remember him or to speak of him or to tag him in an unkindly fashion, like that epithet that you recalled to me, which I think was Ed's witticism (I'm not sure), "Hardly Ever Jackson."* It's really not fair. He was a good man. I see on my bookshelves up there a book by him, 26 Soldiers. Here it is.

Teiser: Is it good?

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*Jackson's full name was Hartley Everett Jackson.

Hart: Oh, Lord, I haven't looked at it for so long I just don't know, even though I have it on my shelves. I think it's -- yes, I'm sure it's very satisfactory. Its purpose is not exactly one that any longer means much to me. It's a kind of basic high school instruction, I think. But it has probably some of the things that I learned from him, and for which I owe a debt to him.

I never really learned to do a good job in printing. But I've had the pleasure of being associated with an awful lot of good printers in a variety of ways. The fact is, I taught myself too early on, you see, in afternoons around the Grabhorn Press, so that I didn't need to be taught properly by the time I got into it. And so I was always doing it myself with an opportunity to be associated with others, but never really got formal or good instruction so that I never learned how to be anything more than a rank amateur. But I certainly did learn things from Hartley Jackson, I'm sure, about mechanics and lockup and all kinds of things. I'm sure of that.

But I did a lot of printing down there that was completely independent. I just ran off some

Hart: pamphlets for myself.

Teiser: Of what sort were they?

Hart: Oh, they were a variety of things. I was an avid young book collector and bought a lot of books and letters. I can remember I bought two rather nice, or interesting letters, by George Moore, and that I put these two letters together to make a pamphlet. I didn't do them in any scholarly fashion. I knocked off the salutations and the signatures from the letters and treated them as though they were a kind of little essay. They dealt with George Moore's search for information for the novel he was writing then -- Sister Theresa. I asked one of the younger professors there to write an introduction.

Teiser: Was that John McClelland?

Hart: John McClelland, absolutely, right.

Teiser: He was a friend of mine.

Hart: Oh, I liked John tremendously, although I must say I only knew him as a student there and he was always "Professor McClelland" to me. He was probably deep into his thirties and I thought of him as a much older man.

Teiser: He wrote so little. He wanted so much to write a

Teiser: lot and he was such a perfectionist.

Hart: Yes. He wrote a very good introduction to these two letters and he made some sense out of them. It was good. That was one thing.

And then also -- it's hard to say which is cause and which is effect -- but I collected little magazines in relation to my work on hesperian. I collected some really good little magazines, you know. I had a tremendous collection, I think probably one of the very best there was. Oh, complete files of the Dial and of Little Review and the Transatlantic Review and Blast -- well, just about everything. I really did have a very good collection.

Well, anyway, out of some of these journals I reprinted, and I think without a by-your-leave sometimes, some little things in these little pamphlets that I printed in, oh, twenty copies, twenty-five copies, and gave them to friends. It turned out afterwards, without my knowing it at that time, that I printed some things that were the first printings outside of magazines; for example, an Ezra Pound poem I liked that had never been separately printed before.* Now it's collected by Ezra Pound

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*"Mr. Housman's Message."

Hart: collectors. And I think the Sherwood Anderson on Dreiser was the first time it was printed separately. But I probably got permission for that from Mr. Anderson, because I knew him slightly. Oh, a variety of little things.

Teiser: The things that you have printed have been most interesting. I have heard it said: what a shame that of all that wonderful printing in San Francisco so little of it was worth reading. [Laughter] But it seems to me that everything you have printed has been of some real literary interest.

Hart: Well, it's nice that you think so. Certainly, after all, I have been interested in literature. At the time that I was getting interested in printing, I was also getting interested in the study of literature. So there should have been some correlation. Sometimes they're trivial texts, purposely, you know, that I've taken for Christmas occasions. But by and large I've been able to get some very good texts. I've been fortunate that way.

Teiser: I'm amazed at your ingenuity at finding so many Christmas things.

Hart: [Laughter] Oh, that's become a little custom for me now. That's been going on so long. That series

Hart: is over twenty years old, I guess. I did print a few Christmas things at Christmas time prior to the time that Ruth and I got settled and got this press, in the other house on Vermont Avenue here. I guess that was directly after the war, about '46. That's become an established practice, so I just keep my eye out for potential things for printing at Christmas time. They have to be very short, you know. I don't want to exhaust [myself or] the reader either. They're just meant to be little greetings, and lively and humorous.

Teiser: I gather from this article by Jane Wilson that you did no printing while you were at Harvard.

Hart: No, no. I had no time for that at all. In fact, I didn't even give myself any opportunity, which I regret now, to have any associations of the sort that I wish I had had. For example, I never went to see Updike. I'm sure I could have paid a call, let us say, and seen that press. I did once meet Mr. Winship, who gave a great course in printing, but I didn't attend the course. I, of course, made use, insofar as it was relevant to my studies, of materials in what was then called the Treasure Room of Widener [Library] at Harvard ; but I can't recall

Hart: taking advantage of seeing things there that I might not have seen at Stanford in the way of works of typographical distinction. I don't think that I really had any concern with printing during that whole period of time.

Teiser: You went right along with your master's and doctor's degrees, didn't you?

Hart: Yes.

Teiser: And you must have had to work hard.

Hart: Well, yes. I was there three and a half years and I got both an M.A. and a Ph.D. in that time. So I didn't have much leisure time.

I did come back every summer to San Francisco. I suppose that I dropped in to see the Grabhorns. I suppose that I kept up a bit. I was not a member of the Book Club, but my father was, and I think we got most of the books. And so I dare say that I did get around a little bit in the summertime.

WILDER BENTLEY, WILLIAM EVERSON AND OTHERS

Teiser: And then when you returned to California, according to Jane Wilson again, you became acquainted with Wilder Bentley.

Hart: Oh, yes, with Wilder. That was after I came over to Berkeley.

Teiser: Did you come directly from Harvard to Berkeley?

Hart: Right. Yes, I did. I moved to Berkeley in August of 1936 and I don't remember how I met Wilder actually, whether somebody introduced us or whether I just discovered this press that had moved into that very charming little courtyard on Euclid, just where La Val's pizza place is now. It was a very attractive setting, and still is, of course. And there I used to see a good deal of Wilder. He was getting himself established. I don't think he had been in the place for more than a year or so when I first got to know him. And he was very kind, very responsive to my interest in typography. He taught me a great deal. He was unbelievably

Hart: meticulous -- too demanding of himself and of others too, perhaps, but so really deeply devoted to the craft. Wilder, although he had a good sense of humor in some ways, wasn't easy with himself or with others the way the Grabhorns were. He was always fighting. And he wanted terribly much to do good things, and he certainly did do them as a printer. And he wanted terribly much to involve others, and therefore he was terribly good to all of us who had associations with him. Wilder created a Broadside Club, I think it was called.

Teiser: I've heard about that. We would like to have on the record as much as you can remember.

Hart: Well, if you really want to have it on the record, maybe I ought to go and look up in that closet there at some of the broadsides, and maybe recall something more. Wait a moment, I'll just take a look. [Pause]

Here [showing broadsides] are some of the things that were done in those days. The Broadside Club series. Here is number one. This one is [by] Tom McDonald, who owns the Albion Press over there [in Dr. Hart's study]. Black Mack. It was done November 29, 1938.

Hart: I think we each had a sponsor that paid for a broadside. We selected the text. We were responsible for working with Wilder on the setting and printing. It was Wilder's club really.

The second one was [by] Fulmer Mood, who was associated, you may know, with the library here at campus. He was a kind of special assistant to the president, I believe, in terms of archival materials and rare book materials, and he was himself a scholar. I think he had a doctorate from Wisconsin or Michigan -- I've forgotten now -- and had written some very good things. That one follows, the next month, I see: December '38.

And this is number four. I don't know where number three is. This is sponsored by George Dane and George Fields. George Dane was a delightful, bright, very lively-minded, humorous man. George Dane, who was, I think, a lawyer with one of the big firms in San Francisco -- I believe I am right about that -- anyway, George collaborated with Franklin Walker on that good book that collected some of Mark Twain's obscure journalistic materials, Travels of Captain Brown. And then George himself

Hart: edited Mark Twain's letters from Hawaii, and those letters from Hawaii, which were put into a very handsome book, were first published by George Fields for his bookstore in San Francisco and printed by the Grabhorns. Then reissued, I think in a changed format, by Stanford University Press.

Anyway, George Dane and George Fields, who had other collaborations, were responsible for this [broadside], and it is particularly representative, you know. The first one, by Tom McDonald, is the Walrus and the Carpenter. And the second, by Fulmer Mood, is Edward Roland Sill's California Winter. And the fourth is a set of verses by Black Bart, you know, the highwayman, and one by Ambrose Bierce on Black Bart. In fact, the kind of local humor that George Dane was much concerned with.

These were occasions to get together to talk, drink a bit and to print a little bit. And it was Wilder who really did all of the work, as I remember it in any event.

It's sort of the opposite of the wonderful club that Jack Gannon, I think -- I'm trying to remember -- conceived at the Grabhorn Press, which

Hart: was also to be kind of a broadside club. And its regulations were to be that as soon as somebody printed a broadside he was no longer a member of the club. [Laughter] So that was fine. Nobody would do anything but talk and drink.

But Wilder was very much more serious. He took everything very hard, and he was wonderfully good and patient. And before I had a press, Wilder -- I knew at that time that I wanted a press, but I wasn't very well established here in Berkeley. So I went to Wilder and he let me make use of his printing equipment and I did.

Teiser: What kind of a press did he have then?

Hart: Wilder had several presses. He had an Acorn Press, which was beautiful. He had an Albion. And the third press I can't seem to recall exactly. But three handsome flatbed presses. He let me use anything I wanted to there.

Teiser: Was there a lot of type?

Hart: There was a great deal of type, a great variety of type. And of course he had been schooled himself by Porter Garnett at the Laboratory Press and had that same perfectionism that marks all of Porter

Hart: Garnett's work. And he had a great reverence for what Porter Garnett was in printing.

I printed little broadsides and leaflets there and one thing and another. And then with Wilder, although Wilder did really the great burden of the work, I printed a very obscure work by Richard Henry Dana, the author of Two Years Before The Mast. It was the first work that Dana ever put into print. It was a legal case that was very interesting on the matter of rights of common sailors, called The Case of Nichols & Couch. That I printed to distribute as a keepsake, to the Roxburghe Club on the occasion of giving a talk before that club, after which, incidentally, I was elected a member. It amuses me to recall this because there have been two histories of the Roxburghe Club and they both say that that talk was never delivered. But I've got the recollection and the evidence to show that it was.

Teiser: Did Wilder Bentley intend at that time to make a profession of printing?

Hart: Oh, definitely. Yes. This was going to be a profession. He was going to make it go commercially.

Hart: He didn't need a great deal, he figured. He lived rather simply, he had some funds, and he did publishing in order to sell. Now he did two handsome, just charming jeux d'esprit of Bret Harte books. The Right Eye of the Commander was one of them; the other one is The Legend of Monte Diablo. And these were illustrated by Lloyd Hoff, everything just beautifully done.

Then he did a beautiful edition of Ansel Adams' photographs. He did a very handsome portfolio, which I have in there right next to these other things I've just brought out, of Chiura Obata's paintings of the campus. Everything was always handmade to the ultimate degree. Every picture in the book by Obata was hand drawn. So each book differs from every other one. It always quite amazed me how Wilder would go to any end to do things by hand, beautifully and perfectly.

Wilder didn't do any commercial work, though, of the sort the Grabhorns did. He simply had a printing shop, let's say for fine printing. He ran a fine press, publishing books and booklets. No ads from American Trust or anything like that

Hart: for him.

Teiser: Can you say that what he was attempting to do was comparable to what the Allens have done?

Hart: Yes. I hadn't thought of that analogy. But it's a very good one. They're husband and wife in each instance, incidentally, because Ellen Bentley was very definitely a member of the Press and was active in all aspects of it. Yes, there is something very analogous. Except the Allens do very sumptuous books, and despite the elegence of the Bentleys' work -- also all hand done, everything, the same way -- the Bentleys generally did make littler books because in the Depression few people could buy the folios they proposed and even rather few bought their smaller works.

The Archetype Press was the name of Wilder's press. Here is something that Wilder printed in April '37, and of course it was hand printed. It says "handprinted at the Archetype Press, that same evening in the presence of the following convivial witnesses," and the following convivial witnesses, each of whom has signed this are: Porter Garnett, George Ezra Dane, James D. Hart, Ellen Bentley,

Hart: Wilder Bentley, and a name that appears to be Park Avitt but I regret to say I don't remember a Mr. Avitt. And then a great deal of Oriental writing that I take to be Chiura Obata's signature.

Teiser: And you knew Porter Garnett?

Hart: Yes. I knew Porter slightly. He lived up somewhere in Napa County. I've really forgotten exactly where it was. He was no longer printing. He was retired. He and his wife were living there and they used to come down once in a while to San Francisco and Berkeley, and he was a kind of patron saint for Wilder Bentley. And what Wilder did was, as I say, to produce books. Your analogy to the Allens, I believe, is interesting. There were three couples, all of whom had presses. Four, I guess, as I stop to think about it. Wilder Bentley and Ellen Bentley; Jackson and Mary Louise Burke; Lewis and Dorothy Allen; and Ted and Fran Lilienthal. Each a husband-and-wife team. Now Wilder and Ellen, or Wilder specifically, gave some instruction to others in printing. Wilder ran a course (and I have a broadside outlining that course) over at the San Francisco School of Fine Arts. I guess it was

Hart: called, oh, I've forgotten the title.

Teiser: School of Fine Arts then, now the San Francisco Art Institute?

Hart: Yes, right. It was a precursor in its way, I guess, too of what Adrian Wilson has done. And hasn't Jack Stauffacher done that too?

Teiser: Yes. And Mallette Dean taught that course too at one time, before Adrian.

Hart: Did he? I didn't know that. Then the Burkes offered a course in their own home at their own press, located I think on Clay Street if I remember correctly. The Allens and the Lilienthals did not offer instruction though. Fran and Ted Lilienthal had Mrs. Van Antwerp associated with them. There was really a threesome in that press. But the other three printers were exclusively husband-and-wife teams except for the artists they had to do their illustrations and ornaments.

The one that was a real commercial press, though, in its very special way (it was not located in a home, for example) was Wilder and Ellen's. I don't remember how many years it ran. Not very long; I think in 1940 it must have come to its

Hart: end. And when it came to its end, after nothing but good publications really -- well, it was a Depression period and some of the books were pretty expensive and some of the projects were a bit special -- Wilder wasn't one to compromise ever with anything, whatsoever. He was a man very demanding of himself and of everybody and of all materials, and in just this Wilder conceived of a big Chaucer project. I can't at the moment remember whether it was Troilus or what he intended. But at any event, it would have been, in the format that he proposed, a very sumptuous, very elaborate, very expensive affair. And there weren't an awful lot of people going around and spending, oh, $50-$60 for a book. The Grabhorns had been established, the Grabhorns had been recognized by the Book Club and by American Institute of Graphic Arts and all that. They could do this, although infrequently. And they did have, as I say, the American Trust and the Ranschoff ads and all that kind of thing. But Wilder couldn't, and didn't. Wilder also couldn't turn out a great deal because it was all hand press, unlike the Grabhorns. There was no power press.

Teiser: Did he set all his own type?

Hart: He set all his own type. Wilder could not make a success of this financially, and as a result, he couldn't print for The Book Club, for example, an edition as large as 300 or 400 copies. He didn't, to my recollection, ever do anything for the Book Club save part of a series of keepsakes. Wilder, when he was unable to make it, grew quite unhappy and in the course of time, I regret to say, deeply embittered, I think, about the whole matter of printing. And he has [now] just simply wiped out a whole side of his life. He doesn't talk about printing, he doesn 't see printers, he doesn't communicate with them, so far as I know.

Teiser: It seems to me in our interview with Brother Antoninus, he indicated that you and Wilder Bentley had worked with him a little.

Hart: I can't remember Wilder involved at all. I may be mistaken, but I think not. I think only I [worked] with Brother Antoninus .

Now, if he had gone to Wilder there would be no question about the fact that he would have got marvelous instruction. And he may have,

Hart: independently. You know, as I try to think about this, I can't recapture it completely, but it's possible that the way he got to me is that he may have gone to see Wilder and Wilder may have been unable to take him on or do anything, and sent him along to me. In any event, somehow or another Bill Everson, as he was then and as I really keep thinking of him, did come to see me, and he spent a little time with me at our house in the room that I had downstairs for study and for printing, just like this one, on Vermont Avenue, and there assisted me in the printing of a little booklet that I was doing at the moment.* But, although he had never seen a hand press, he had worked on power presses up at the conscientious objectors camp, Waldport, I think it was called.

He's a man of such wonderful taste, and also great ingenuity, that he didn't need anybody to help him on printing. He wanted to see how it worked, but he soon beat us all at the game as soon as he got his own press. He was just marvelous and as ingenious as he could be. He was as demanding

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*See Appendix I.

Hart: of himself, incidentally, as Wilder was. The same sort of insistence on the finest craftsmanship. And when he established his little press at his house on Ashby Avenue, he rigged up interesting and very clever devices to assist him in the fine printing. Among other things he had a great aptitude for the mechanics of craftsmanship.

Teiser: He doesn't seem like a mechanic.

Hart: Well, mechanic may be going too far. I think craft ability, handicraft ability is what we should say. I think, for example, of Lewis Allen having devised (as far as I know he devised it) a very clever mechanism for drying paper and also a way of holding the paper damp and so on. And I remember that Bill Everson devised a very ingenious means for make-ready on his frisket. Also a very ingenious means for printing a second color on a hand press for good register. I'd say these are the skills of a good craftsman.

He's a very remarkable man, a very fine poet, I think. A wonderful human spirit, and I think he might well write more prose, because I think his prose is very powerful. I think what he wrote about

Hart: his own experience in printing that was published in the Book Club News Letter is very good indeed.

PRINTING PRESSES

Teiser: Did you have this same press then?

Hart: I had the same press. I've only owned this press, in actuality. The other one, the Black Mack, is not mine. I've had it, thanks to McDonald, so long that I keep thinking of it as mine and I've used it a great deal and done a lot of work on it. But this one, the Reliance, I bought from Jane Grabhorn, who called it "The Monster." She bought it, I've forgotten for the moment where, but never found it successful -- and it is a devil of a press -- and she said she would trade it to me. I wanted it. She was kicking about it one day and I said, "Jane, I'll buy it. I'm looking for a press, and I'll tinker with it." And she said, no, she wouldn't sell it, but she would trade me it if I could give her a good proof press. (And what she wanted was the kind of press that Herb and I had worked on initially 'way back on that first thing we were talking about that was done at that so-called Penguin Press.) Well, I scouted around. These were less difficult to find, a little proof press, artist's proof press, and I found one, and Jane was

Hart: satisfied with it. So I had that one delivered to her and then I got this from her. And I've had this ever since and I've taken it apart and put it together and worked over it and it's still a monster. She's right. It's man-eating.

Teiser: But it's what you print your . . .

Hart: What I do everything on. And from time to time I think I wish I had a big Albion. They're beautiful. It would be just a pleasure, they have such a fine action. Rather than this. One fights this press a lot. And I've had others who have come up and associated themselves and helped me. (Wilder the very first, and then Adrian Wilson has been up here.) But they all say they rather enjoy that press because it presents so many problems.

Teiser: About when was it that you got it from Jane?

Hart: Oh, about '46, I should think.

Teiser: When did you get this from McDonald?

Hart: That must be back about nine years ago, I guess, something like that.

Teiser: What about McDonald? He's another person who is mentioned often. But I have nothing on the record about him. Could you tell about him?

Hart: Well, you might say he played a part in fine printing in the Bay Area. He is one of the few people, although I don't think he is unique, to have been at both the Nash and Grabhorn presses. That's interesting.

Teiser: As a compositer?

Hart: Yes. Yes, he is. I've known Mac casually but never well. He doesn't allow one to know him terribly well, it seems to me. But he's awfully warm hearted and marvelous; the generosity of giving me this press to use indefinitely this way. I got the press when he moved from Berkeley, as he was then resident here, down to Mexico for about five years. He gave me a lot of his typographical books too at the same time. He never wanted them back again. By typographical books I don't mean books of fine printing, but catalogues of Stephenson, Blake and Co. and things of that sort.

And he's again -- I guess it's part of the business of printing and perhaps that's one of the reasons I remain an amateur -- he is also terribly, terribly demanding of himself. Everything has to be just so, just right in printing.

Tei

Teiser: Has he done much printing?

Hart: No, rather little, I think. I can't remember that everything's been done on that press, but I rather suspect so. He did a lovely little book, very delicately, beautifully done, on bookplates a good many years ago. He did a rather charming booklet -- it's hardly a book and it isn't bound, it's sewn with some paper covers I think -- of his father's reminiscences of San Francisco in the 1880's. And then he did a perfectly remarkable little book, although I don't think it was much of his own printing but more of his own devising and designing, of his research on the press of Juan Pablos, which was the first press in the New World -- I have a photograph of it over there, if that is indeed the Juan Pablos press. It's been quite an issue. And Mac worked out a very careful study of where that press might have come from and what the contractual relations were between Pablos and, I'm embarrassed to say I've forgotten the famous printer in the old world from whom he had his apprenticeship, and so on. And this was prepared by Mac and printed in Mexico in a

Hart: format, oh, about as big as that [holding fingers about an inch apart], as a real book. It's beautiful.

Teiser: One inch by one inch, is that right?

Hart: Something like that. It's a handsome leather-bound book, a beautifully tooled book. And it's a fine piece of scholarship on Mac's part. Mac is a good scholar on what he works on. He knows a great deal about the history of printing.

Teiser: But he has just been a working printer, an employee?

Hart: Exactly. I don't think he's ever wanted anything else than that.

Now this press he got from John Henry Nash. Nash got it from Bruce Rogers, and then it went to McDonald, and I'm sorry to say it's traveled down a long way in the world to my hands now.

Teiser: Is that what you print the little Christmas book inserts on?

Hart: I do, yes. And we put labels, too, on the envelopes, and they get printed on there too.

Teiser: Were there many small presses like that created or manufactured?

Hart: I don't know enough about the number, but I

Hart: think they're not all that uncommon. They are now, of course. But Roger Levenson, who has been rather a specialist in collecting them, as you may know, in getting them for other people, I think he would be able to tell you they weren't that unusual.

Teiser: They make bedroom printing possible, don't they?

Hart: Well, they could at that. [Laughter] Well, Ruth [Mrs. James D. Hart] enjoys this little press. This [other] one she can't really operate; this is just too big for a lady really. And that's another reason why Jane found this big press impossible for her. But the little one is a pleasure to operate, and as you can see it's just a handsome little thing there.

James D. Hart printing his 1969
Christmas book. August 10, 1969.

Photographs by Ruth Teiser.

CHRISTMAS BOOKS AND ILLUSTRATORS

Hart: Here is another one of the Broadside Club's ventures. These illustrations here, like the one on the bulletin board there, are by Hans Hoff. Lloyd Hoff is his proper name, I don't know how Hans came about. Whether it's Lloyd Hans Hoff I'm not sure, or whether he just took Hans as a nickname and was so called. I've always called him Lloyd. Some may call him Hans. He certainly signs his drawings Hans.

Now Lloyd Hoff was and is just, I think, a very first-rate whimsical, light, ingenious illustrator. And I think these are marvelous. That one that I have up there is a great picture of a lamb and a lion and I think it's quite beautiful. Now Lloyd was a commercial illustrator, and still is. Wilder and he became associated, and he did illustrations for many of Wilder's publications. He also did some commercial illustrations. I remember I mentioned a little while ago George Dane's book published for George Fields, of the letters from Hawaii by Mark Twain. That commercial publication was illustrated by Lloyd Hoff.

Hart: And then I got Lloyd to do the first illustrations for me in all of my little Christmas booklets in the first several years. Those from 1946, which I believe is the first date (oh, I'm just making a guess) were done by Lloyd. However, he moved away from San Francisco about 1950, and as a result to do the illustrating became less convenient for him. And he probably was less interested in doing the drawings because he didn't really have much of a hand in the project. I would lay out the design and send him a text, and I would show him what I wanted and then he would do it. And that was certainly less fun for the artist, less creative, and so we drifted away from collaboration. He never refused to do anything. He was always very generous. But I think he grew tired of it.

So around -- maybe Jane Wilson will have the date -- around the 1950's, mid-1950's I should guess, Lloyd Hoff did the last little Christmas booklet and then Victor Anderson did the illustrations thereafter; Vic does them now, every one of them. Vic also, like Lloyd Hoff, is a commercial artist and also possesses a wonderful whimsical humor and

Hart: really good artistic skill, I think.

Teiser: You said you had worked with Adrian Wilson.

Hart: Well, I can't claim that. I wish I could. No, Adrian's been a friend of mine for a long while. No matter what the obstacles, I manage to get out a Christmas booklet. But one year, I think it was '57, when I was Vice-Chancellor, I was just too busy really to do the work. I had all the type set and everything was paged and all ready to run, but I just didn't have the time to do the printing, on the hand press. So I told Adrian this or asked Adrian if I could have it run at his press, and Adrian was very generous. And that's the only one of the Christmas booklets that was run off on a power press. Now that was run off by Adrian with me. I did all the type setting, I put it all in pages, and Adrian and I ran it together. But I don't really know how to run a power press. And that's the only association I had with Adrian on printing.

RECOLLECTIONS OF PRINTERS PRESENT AND PAST

Teiser: I see. How do you evaluate the work Adrian Wilson does?

Hart: Oh, I think it's just wonderful. Absolutely marvelous. The Printing for Theater is one of the really fine books produced here. I think that's a beautiful piece of work. And he is so ingenious, Adrian is. I sometimes am less than enthusiastic about what he did to the text that I wrote for that Book Club book called My First Publication, because he made it, I thought, almost illegible by printing on a variety of colored papers that are hard to read black ink on. [Laughter] But I think the whimsicality of it is just wonderful. I liked it very much. And it's ingenious. You may recall that little book. It's made up of contributions by eleven California authors, beginning with Dana, I guess, and coming down to Saroyan. And I wrote an introduction to each of these, oh, a thousand words about. What he did was to print the other authors, the basic text, on white paper, and then my text on a different color paper for each one. The idea is fine when it's on a light colored

Hart: stock, but when it's on a dark colored stock you can hardly read it. But it makes it an attractive book to look at.

But Adrian's done one fine book after another for the Book Club and others. He's just wonderful. He's a delightful person to work with.

Teiser: Are there any others printers with whom you have actually worked?

Hart: No, there's nobody else with whom I've actually worked. Right from the earliest days, when I was getting enthusiastically interested as a very, oh, I guess practically as a boy, when I was in high school -- it was, of course, the Grabhorns to whom I turned. But I used to go see John Henry Nash and I used to go see Taylor and Taylor and all of the others.

Teiser: Was John Henry Nash receptive? Was he pleasant to you?

Hart: No. He was frosty, aloof. But he did have a library. It was a wonderful library, it seemed to me. It was open to the visitor and Miss O'Day, who was its custodian, was kind enough in receiving me. And so I was able to spend some time there and

Hart: become acquainted with books I would not have seen otherwise, even though Stanford also had a good library of typographical materials. But this was a better library -- well, it appeared to me to be better, in some ways. And also it was a working and living library, and I was interested in some of the journals I saw there -- Dolphin and things like that. And Nash did permit me (or maybe couldn't help but allow me, because I was pushy) to wander around in his composing room and talk to several of the people, to get to know them casually at least.

The Taylors also were removed. Besides that, they seemed like big business to me at that time. They were doing very good catalogues, for example for the San Francisco Museum of Art. Oh, catalogues for exhibitions. I can remember the Diego Rivera one being done. I was very interested in Rivera at that time too, and got Diego Rivera to write an article for me for that journal, hesperian.

I can remember that I used to sit on the scaffolding with Mr. Rivera. [Laughter] He was quite a figure. And I remember going around to Taylor and Taylor, and then, of course, the Johnson

Hart: brothers' press, the Windsor Press.

So I knew all the printers. And I also knew old Thomas Russell, my goodness.

Teiser: You knew him?

Hart: Yes, sure. Thomas C. Russell. Yes, I used to go out to his place, out in the avenues, out about 19th Avenue, something like that, out by Golden Gate Park. It was one of just dozens and dozens of row houses, all identical. You know, the unattractive little stucco houses that San Francisco has out there. And yet in that house was something very, very special. There was the press and the library and that curious crotchety man with all that knowledge and all that lore. And he was very receptive. Yes, he was. Yes, I can remember.

Teiser: How did you happen to make your way there?

Hart: Oh, nerve, I suppose. I don't know. I think probably I saw his books at Newbegin's. Newbegin's carried them. And very likely they had an address on them, you see, because he sold books not only through book stores but primarily from his house. And you were supposed to write to him, whatever the address might have been, but I guess I just took

Hart: myself out there. Maybe I had the courtesy, but I doubt it, to phone first.

Teiser: What kind of equipment did he use?

Hart: Well, you know, I don't know. Isn't it awful, I don't remember. It was a power press, but I really don't know what it was. It could have been a Colts, or a Chandler and Price, I really don't know.

Teiser: It seems to me Eleanor Bancroft remembered him working in the Bancroft Library.

Hart: Sounds perfectly likely. I think he was the grandfather of us all in the sense of being the first printer of Californiana, in actually reprinting rare Californiana in fine editions. Now everybody has done it. And it's not to denigrate anything of the Grabhorn Press, Lord knows, when I say he antedated their Americana series by quite a bit. This was back in the 'twenties he was doing this. By the time I went around there I am not at all sure he was still printing any longer. He had his equipment, but I suspect his printing was mostly '25-6-7.

Teiser: Do you consider his work "fine printing?"

Hart: Yes, I guess I do. Well, it's certainly meticulous printing. That's fair enough anyway. It's got some quality to it. He was a fussy old man, and his books are fussy. But, you know, I think his handling of colors and the borders and designs and the makeup -- well, the makeup is curious sometimes -- but Lord knows the type setting is just impeccable. Oh, he would fuss over a line to make quite sure there would never be any likelihood of anything wrong in the spacing or the margins and so on. He was very concerned there should never be hyphens, you know. That would make the margins look ragged.

Teiser: Amazing.

Hart: Yes, he was amazing.

Teiser: What did he look like?

Hart: I hope I'm right in remembering what he looked like. I think he was a slight man, short, slight in frame, whitish hair, fringe of hair, bright eyed, and that's about all that he remains for me, I'm sorry to say. I remember calling upon him a couple of times, when I was maybe a senior in high school and a freshman in college and he was probably --

Hart: I'm just making a guess now -- say in his 70's, which is equivalent to being about 103 to a high school student.

Teiser: Are there other printers whose work you have been interested enough in to be analytical about?

Hart: I don't know. I've collected printing. I don't put myself in the category of being a real collector, but I have purchased a little something representing the Doves Press and the Kelmscott and the Ashendene. Of course I couldn't have known Cobden-Sanderson nor William Morris, but I did correspond, again in my nervy style, with St. John Hornby. And he was very good to a young boy and he used to -- I must say he surely got a bad deal -- we used to trade Harvest Press and Ashendene Press publications. [Laughter] So that just shows you how nice that man was. I have a few things he sent to me, and of course I was tremendously impressed by that wonderful, bold, beautiful press work.

Local printers. . . I think I knew everybody casually. I can't contend I knew any of the people any better then the ones I just mentioned to you. I'm just trying to think of others I did know. I

Hart: did not know the Southern California people except one or two very casually or belatedly.

Gregg Anderson I knew when Gregg worked at the Grabhorn Press and I was very fond of Gregg, as I think everybody was who knew him. A marvelous, fine person. And with the taste and the flair to have made a very good printer, I'm sure, had he been able to live long enough to have established himself more. But even the early things, now. . . Gregg lived at Hazel Dreis' house. Hazel was a binder, you may know, for the Grabhorn Press, independently; she did other things too. She didn't work at the Press, as I can recall, but she had her own bindery and did some of the Grabhorn Press books.

Teiser: Ed Grabhorn apparently fell out with her.

Hart: Oh, Ed could. Of course, Ed had real scunners against people, and Hazel was very tough. She was a tough girl. And I'm sure if they ran into one another there was some friction. They were both salty characters. And yet now, Hazel did the Taos book, I'm pretty sure, and that's a very handsome book. I know that Hazel did not do either Leaves of Grass or the Mandeville. Bill Wheeler did those, and

Hart: those are very beautiful.

Teiser: It seems to me that it was Leaves of Grass that she started and Bill Wheeler finished.

Hart: That's possible. Here's a little book that Hazel did for me, as a present, and it looks to me to be pretty nicely bound.

Teiser: Yes, it's beautiful.

Hart: That was sweet of her to do that. There's more binding than there is book, you know. That pamphlet is the first thing that I ever had a hand in printing, with Herb Reynolds -- she did that lovely binding.

Well, Hazel ran a boarding house for artists or artisans and so on. I don't think it was open to just anybody, as it were. And among the people who lived there for a certain length of time was Gregg Anderson, and Gregg printed a little book while he was there. I guess he must have done it on the Grabhorn Press equipment, but I can't remember. I can't remember any press that he himself had at that time.

I guess this is a long parenthesis: What I began to say is that I didn't know the Los Angeles printers except Gregg, of course, one does associate with

Hart: Los Angeles. He was only with the Grabhorn Press a very short time. Gregg I think had lots of potentiality as a printer, and was a good printer, too.

Teiser: Were you about to say that he printed something for Hazel Dreis?

Hart: No, he did something while he was living there. It's a quite obscure little book. It was Ralph Hodgson's Song of Honour. I feel it's somewhere on my shelves; I can't put my fingers on it at the moment.

So he was another of the printers that I knew at that time. Since that time, now that I'm involved in the Book Club and so on, I guess I have got to be acquainted at least with almost all the fine press printers in California.

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA AND ALBERT BENDER

Teiser: Your association with The Book Club, beyond reading your father's books, began when? When did you become a member?

Hart: I really don't know. My father died in 1938. My guess is that I just picked up his membership in '38. I'm pretty sure that's so. He didn't have any great interest. In fact he had really no interest I should say. I think probably Albert Bender had got him to be a supporter of this, just as he would contribute to the symphony or whatever. This was just one of the cultural activities in San Francisco.

Teiser: Did you know Bender, incidentally?

Hart: Oh, yes, sure. I knew him well. And so I think I just picked up my father's membership in '38, and I was really interested by that time in all of its activities. I don't think I took any substantial part in the Club as early as that. It was several years later before I became more actively involved, in the 'forties somewhere.

Teiser: Over the years that you have been active in it, what have you seen its function as being?

Hart: Oh, I think it's been several things. It has provided, first of all, a stimulus for the fine book in California beyond anything. I think it has been the organization. I mean, granted there are fine presses and there have been some of towering importance, like the Grabhorn Press, but there has been no other organization that has a quasi-public character and has encouraged fine printers and has given them an audience. It has afforded an impetus for all kinds of printers, Grabhorn among them. They could count on having a public that was interested; they could count on a good order without anybody saying, "Your books should look like this, or this." The text is given to the printers and they are allowed to go ahead and do what they want with that text, because the Club trusts them. It has also fostered an interest and knowledge of California literature and history. And it has afforded somewhat of a meeting place and point of stimulus for young people (alas, not as much as it should) interested in the matter of its domain of literature and the fine art of book making. From time to time

Hart: there have been groups that have sort of sprung out of it, like the -- oh, I've forgotten the name of that organization that we had of amateur printers. Things of that sort.

Teiser: One of the people we have been interested in because of the impetus he gave to The Book Club and also many other things, was Albert Bender. And I think that in these interviews the people who knew him best were the Grabhorns, but they were in a special relationship to him. Perhaps you knew him in a way that gave you a broader view of him or a more personal view.

Hart: Oh, I shouldn't think that at all. I should think that the Grabhorns knew him better in many ways and they had a much closer, more meaningful relationship. No, I couldn't presume on that. Well, first of all, although Mickey* was a good deal older than Ed Grabhorn, nevertheless there was a close relationship. There were certain special associations that I didn't have. And I did not know Mickey as a man until I myself was a good deal older than in the first years I have been reminiscing about. Mickey was of my father's

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*Albert Bender's nick-name.

Hart: generation; the two of them must have been pretty close of an age, I suppose. Funny, I can't seem to place an age for Mickey, to know exactly when he was born. I'm just making a guess at it. Maybe a little younger than my father.

At any event, they knew one another, and so I guess it was that way that I got to know him, though anybody who was interested in anything in the arts in San Francisco would run into him at some point or another and he would greet one in his jolly, snorting fashion, now at Gump's, now at the Grabhorn Press, now at Vickery, Atkins and Torrey's print room, or he would invite one to his Post Street studio-like flat. You know, you just got to know him and see him. And he was always hauling out letters out of his vest pockets to show you who had just written to him and the glories of what they thought about him, or he would stutter and splutter with gusto about what he was contributing to the Mills College library or to Trinity College, Dublin or wherever. And there was a heartiness, a jolliness about this, an innocent egoism and infectious enthusiasm that was quite

Hart: delightful.

And then one would go to his studio apartment and see all that collection of oddments, of paintings, of Oriental art and all kinds of things. You see he had tremendous enthusiasms for things. I don't think he had much discrimination. He liked everything. He liked to be liked. He was a lonely man. He accumulated, he selected, but he accumulated more than he selected, I think. He had some good pictures, but he had an awful lot of stuff that didn't amount to much. But also he got some of these things because he was helping out young artists. He wanted to be helpful, and he was a veritable benefactor of the arts on a local, small level, through his money and money he got from others (Mrs. Stern and the Haases and a great many others) because he wanted to help local art and he was concerned with that very, very seriously, perhaps out of sympathetic recollection of the painter, Ann Bremer, the cousin he loved. Mickey wasn't an artist or a creator himself, but he adored artists and arts of all sorts and he wanted always to help the creators to make their

Hart: works known to other people. And so he was a kind of one-man sponsor, among other things, of fine printing, aiding the established by orders and stimulating the young by praise and by orders too. It is too bad that he never wrote, let alone tape recorded, his recollections. Then you would have had something of real interest.

APPENDIX I

During the editing of this interview, a passage from a 1966 interview in the same series, Brother Antonius: Poet, Printer and Religious, was sent to Dr. Hart. It concerned his meeting and printing with Brother Antonius, who was in that year, 1946, still William (Bill) Everson. It was somewhat at variance with the account of the same events in Dr. Hart's interview.

This is Brother Antonius' account:

"When I had first gotten out of the camp, I went to Wilder Bentley. He was not printing then but he talked to me about it. About this same time, Jim Hart had gotten back from the war. He wanted to do something on his press. It was that Ode to the Virginian Voyage, that Drayton thing. So Wilder Bentley got us together in order to see how we would do. Jim Hart was a little afraid of me because I was a beatnik. My hair was down to my shoulders, I had a great big Latin Quarter style hat. He was a little bit spookey around me because he is an Appollonian and I am a Dionysian. But after awhile we got to working together.

"That summer Wilder Bentley had to take a job....

He was very tired and could not devote too much time to us. He kind of threw us overboard once he introduced us. I went over to Jim Hart's place. This would be in the summer of 1946 before I had gone to Treesbank. It was here that we printed Drayton's Ode to the Virginian Voyage that we worked on. Neither of us knew anything about hand press printing. We were struggling on it together.... We got through and he gave it out as a Christmas offering....

"Wilder did not really have a chance to show me much.... He gave me a little demonstration of what the mechanism looked like and how it operated. Also, the day we were over at Hart's trying to print, we did not get started because he waid that Jim Hart had set the type all wrong, so we spent the day resetting that type. That, you know, is what knocked that out. Jim Hart and I, the only day that he had to give us, hardly got to hand printing at all. Then after that, we just had to go by what he could remember of what Wilder had shown him before the war. We were babes in the woods together. That is all the handpress printing instruction that I had."

Dr. Hart wrote this comment upon it:

"I guess that Bill is probably right in remembering that Wilder Bentley brought the two of us together. But I do not recall that Wilder joined us at my house, although a few weeks earlier, in the summer of 1946, he helped me to move my press there. Anyway, Bill and I spent a day, or perhaps two, together in my basement press room-study. My recollection is that I took to him right away but that he was a bit uneasy in our bourgeois environment. Perhaps we "spooked" one another a little bit but I like to think that we also liked one another pretty quickly.

"Bill is also right that we worked on that little pamphlet, Ode to the Virginian Voyage, which, along with my next piece of printing, The Mote in the Middle Distance, are my poorest pieces of work. They are poor because a long four years intervened between them (the first was printed in August, the second in November 1946) and my last experience with a hand press. During those years my thoughts had been on matters concerned with the war and I had plain forgotten a lot that I had once known. I feel moderately certain I never forgot anything about typesetting, but to Bill Everson, experienced with a power press, I may have

seemed like more of a novice than I really was. I remember the biggest problem about the printing of Drayton's Ode was that his poem was printed on some eighteenth-centry paper I had picked up in Virginia while my commentary and the title and colophon pages were printed on modern paper. This made for differences in register. Besides that, I recall that I did not dampen the paper as I should have. So Bill and I did have our troubles as we worked on that recently reassembled press of mine. In fact, I remember that I was so dissatisfied with the Drayton pamphlet that I hardly distributed any copies of it.

A TRIBUTE TO EDWIN GRABHORN AND THE GRABHORN PRESS

by

James D. Hart

delivered at a meeting of

The Friends of the San Francisco Public Library

April 24, 1969

A TRIBUTE TO EDWIN GRABHORN AND THE GRABHORN PRESS

James D. Hart

We are gathered here today to pay tribute to Edwin Grabhorn and to the Press he helped to create, a firm that as a working organization ended with his passing. But I am sure we come together not so much out of grief as out of appreciation. Sadness was no part of Ed's life and sadness is no way by which to remember him. But appreciation is certainly suitable, for Ed was a man who himself had appreciation for all aspects of life and he engendered appreciation.

Edwin Grabhorn was born eighty years ago in the Midwest. There he lived until at the age of twenty he came to the West Coast. For most of his life he was a San Franciscan and he added very significantly to San Francisco's reputation as a place where the arts flourished, a city that is hospitable to the creative spirit. Understandably enough, a paperback guidebook to San Francisco cites "the city's enthusiasm for craftsmanship" as a reason "why it is a center for fine printing" and then goes on to direct the visitor to "The Grabhorn Press, 1335 Sutter St., the most

celebrated of all the City's printing establishments, and its operators, Edwin and Robert Grabhorn have been called the best printers in the world." Yes, the Press belonged to the world, not merely to its location in San Francisco. Indeed, no matter how long he lived here nor how much he gave to the City, Ed always kept something of the Midwesterner about him, that Midwest which represents the heartland of America. There was something of the Hoosier way of speech in his voice and there was something too of the simple Midwest in his style. Although he has been tagged "a gentleman from Indiana" in deference to his background and in recollection of Booth Tarkington's novel of that title, he was really no more of that state than he was of California. Rather, Ed had those qualities that one calls American. He himself was a piece of Americana. He had that kind of Americanness that we identify with the strong, hearty Midwesterner. Simple, open, homespun, earthy, tough-fibred, self-taught, direct, humorous, accepting of life, easy with people, and possessed of ways that are identified with the folk.

For all the sophistication of his taste, Ed Grabhorn himself was a very simple man. He was a man, one felt,

of the people, in the sense that people are the folk possessed of a kind of primitive force and directness. These are not the people in the sense of those who form a large public or who belong to a big middle class. There was never anything middling about Ed Grabhorn. Yet neither was there ever any putting on of airs. Ed never thought about himself as a person of accomplishments nor did he ever talk in any pretentious fashion about the books that he and Bob produced. Despite the Grabhorn collectors who paid fulsome tribute and good hard cash too for the Press' works, Ed never allowed himself to be collected. He never gave a sense that he thought of himself or his publications as anything special. One never had to defer to an artistic temperament.

Although he and Bob ran a fine press, it was also a printing shop, where they turned out advertising texts along with great folios on handmade paper. The ads had to be got out for deadlines and the great books had to be reflected upon carefully, yet Ed and Bob never seemed to mind disturbances. There was always time for visitors, and visitors were always welcome if they were not obsequious, or unpleasantly prying, or foolish. Although the Grabhorn Press did a tremendous amount of business,

it did it in a pleasantly unbusinesslike way, quite in keeping with Ed's nature. Never was there talk of costs or concern with mechanical details like the computing of number of pages or the count of characters on a page. As Sherwood Grover once said, "the only characters that were counted were those that came in the front door. Some days the count ran high." But they were always accepted into the casual, unhurried way of the Press. It is hard to understand how Ed and Bob found time to print all those books, let alone the security of mind to make of them the masterpieces that they are.

With his remarkable combination of personal security and of gregarious interest in other people, Ed could receive any number of visitors without ever skipping a beat in the eternal rhythm of the Press as he fed pages, watched their color, and stacked them neatly.

Ed carried on his conversation, generally laconic, and his business at the same time. About the only visitor who made him stop for the moment was a book scout with something worth examining. Then Ed would shut off the Press for a while and undemonstratively examine the discoveries that the scout had dredged up in some hidden spot and brought to Pine Street or

Commercial, or Sutter, depending upon the date of the happening and the location of the Press. But no matter what the surroundings, the situation was ever the same, and so was Ed. He was a great collector, interested in all kinds of things that he collected. He had no formal schooling but he was educated beyond any academy in Californiana, Japanese prints, and other fine materials that he liked. When the scouts offered him their choicest discoveries, there was never any question about who got the best of the deal. Ed was a born horse-trader. But if he didn't buy any nags, sometimes he did buy a whole stable just to get the one thing he wanted. I remember one time when he had to buy up a whole houseful of oddments just to get hold of some General Vallejo materials. But with his homespun shrewdness Ed saw to it that he didn't waste any of the fringe stuff that he had to take with the basic Vallejo collection. Among the oddments was a pair of the General's spectacles: spindly, oblong, silver-framed. They looked as if they might have belonged not just to General Vallejo but to Benjamin Franklin. Ed tried them on, squinted a few times, and declared that the General must have had exactly the same sort of vision he himself had. The glasses fitted him

perfectly, he said. For a long time he went around peering out of them. Eventually they disappeared. Perhaps headaches drove those rickety glasses off his nose, but not until Ed had seen his money's worth through them. Indeed, I suspect that Ed looked through those lenses longer than General Vallejo himself.

If Ed was good to the collectors, book dealers, and curiosity seekers who drifted into the shop, he was also a remarkably casual employer. And what a great company of people passed through the employment of the Grabhorn Press! And now I think not of those who were the Press: Ed and Bob and Jane, all of the family, as Mary was too. Nor his widow, Irma, who engraved the color blocks for the last of the Japanese Print books. No, now I think of the people who worked at the Press in another capacity, the one that would in a more formally organized establishment be that which is called an employee. But it was typical of Ed, and Bob too, that nobody was ever an employee. While he was there he was as much a member, indeed a partner of the Press, as Ed was. There was Valenti Angelo, a young, untutored artist from North Beach, a boy of great aesthetic sensibility, who had a remarkable feeling for the early

Renaissance illumination and drawings of his compatriots in the Italy he had never seen. Although he was the house artist for work that ranged from a Ransohoff ad to the Voiage of Sir John Maundeville, Valenti, like everybody else, contributed his opinions to the whole process of selecting a text, designing it, and printing it. The process was a curiously informal, collaborative one that Ed allowed to go on as long as it served his purposes of generating and testing ideas. Then, all of a sudden, he would have enough of it and he would know where he was going. Then he would say: "Come on, let's go to work." And everybody would shamble back to somewhat more isolated tasks.

The people who engaged in such activities included, in no particular order of chronology or importance (and that suits the casualness of the Press) many whom I am happy to recall. There was pert, dark-eyed, lively Helen Gentry, who graduated from type setting to the establishment of her own printing firm on the other side of Commercial Street which she would cross every so often to borrow, say, a swash capital M, just as any housewife might turn to her better endowed neighbor for a cup of sugar. There was the scrupulously careful

compositor, Thomas McDonald, who had served an earlier apprenticeship with John Henry Nash. There was Bill Wheeler too, a good book binder who went about his business and seemed to be scornful of any undue artiness that he thought he detected around the shop. And then there was fresh, boyish-faced shy-mannered Gregg Anderson, a dedicated craftsman himself, who was probably the only one of the Grabhorn staff who had ever seen the inside of a college (Pomona, it so happens) and who was perhaps therefore rather scholarly but not so much so as to obscure a wonderful quiet wit and a pleasantly poetic sensitivity. Quite different from him was Jack Gannon, a jack of all trades, and a very loose, easy-going fellow. He had enthusiasms that ranged from the poetry of Pound to good music, and abilities beyond presswork to the making of strong, primitive woodcuts and lively, offbeat humorous poems. He was, as he has been called, "the master apprentice." And more recently, there were Sherwood (Bill) Grover and his wife, Trina. He was so long at the Press that he seemed part of the family. He himself has told something of what life was like in working for Ed and Bob. "I would be told to set up a title page, using specified types. The first time this

happened, I though 'How can they trust me to set up the title page?' I need not have worried. I went all out - no time was ever kept - and finally pulled a proof. "That's God awful," Ed said, and made suggestions, mostly as to smaller type. This procedure went on for two or three more revised proofs. Finally I was put on another job and the title page was forgotten for a few days. Then Bob or Ed quietly set up a title page and it was run off before I knew what had happened." The really brilliant ingenuity of the pages he sets for his own Gracehoper Press belies Sherwood's anecdote about Ed's words but the rest of it is right as to flavor and fact.

I remember too Mallette Dean, another great artist, who began his career of creating strong woodcuts and of fine handpress printing under the tutelage of the Grabhorn Press.

Although he never sullied his hands by printer's ink or messing in the type case, Oscar Lewis was also very much a member of the Press. It was he who was given the almost impossible task of bringing some kind of order to this raffish printing house that was also supposed to be a business. Handsome, urbane, and always self-possessed, Oscar somehow coped with the

higgledy-piggledy commerce of the firm. His lot could not have been made easier by the surroundings that Ed almost symbolically assigned to this business-like part of the Grabhorn Press. The office space given to Oscar was the one generally called the smallest room in the house. Although some of its fixtures had been removed, it still contained some that had once served for even more purifying purposes than those Oscar was called upon to render. And so there he worked beside a bathtub that he used as a kind of filing cabinet, and from there he would send out bills, write texts for announcements, and answer such letters as got answered.

The very diversity of the people who worked for the Press indicated something about Ed as a so-called employer. He attracted all kinds of people and he got along with them all in his own special way. Representative of that way (although nothing about Ed's ways fell into an established pattern) was his relationship with Tom Hewitt, who served him for a long time as a press man. Tom was good at the press but he could take it only so long and then he had to go out and get thoroughly drunk so that he could rid himself ot the eternal rhythm of feeding sheet after sheet to his Colt's Armory. When he

had enough of bars and booze Tom would drift back again and start feeding the press as though nothing had happened. Once Ed sent Tom out to buy some French chalk which Ed sometimes mixed into the ink. The mission coincided with Tom's need for a drink. As usual, one led to another. All told he was gone six weeks, although he did phone in once, about three weeks along the way, to say that he had lost his glasses and would be back as soon as he found them. When Tom finally did turn up, glasses on nose, he handed Ed the French chalk with steady hands, as though nothing untoward had happened. Ed treated the matter the same way. All that Ed said was: "Where did you go for it, Tom - Paris?"

Because Ed was anything but a regular employer he had curious ways to taking people on and of letting them go; it is a wonder that either ever occurred. When Helen Gentry came to the Press and asked for a job, she recalls that"Ed said printing would spoil my hands, and told me to come back in a couple of months," as though somehow her hands wouldn't be spoiled then. Well, unlike most other applicants, she did return. This time he said to come back the next week. And so, she continues, "I was on hand Monday morning early. Ed was out, but

a young fellow who looked like him (Bob) put me to work - rather dubiously, I learned later. When Ed saw me at the case with stick, he asked my name, and walked over to the press and began feeding. Later he arranged my hours and wages." Ed was no better at letting people go. When he told Jack Gannon that he no longer had a place for him, Jack just nodded and finished out the day. The next morning he came back bringing a book. Perhaps it was some of Joyce's work, of which he was very fond. Whatever it was, Jack read all day, except for going out to lunch with Bob and Val as usual. The next day and the day thereafter he did the same thing. On the afternoon of the fourth day, Ed told him he'd better get to work. And so he did.

Perhaps this was why thereafter if Ed decided he had to let somebody go, he could not say the cruel words directly. Instead he would declare on a Friday afternoon that he was going to have to shut the shop forever, beginning that very afternoon. Perhaps it was general financial problems, perhaps personal ones, that he mumblingly alleged, but the shop was to be closed and everybody would have to go. And so there would be sad farewells and perhaps a parting drink. Then on

Monday Ed would open the shop again, the real family would return, and all would go on as usual, save for the missing man who had never been dismissed.

This process was as illogically logical, as disorderly ordered as anything that Ed did. His was a personal shop but the personal side of it was not simply individualistic. As Jane has said, Ed and Bob were like a pair of sci sors, the two of them working together to create the result. One gives a disproportionate view of the achievements of the Press by concentrating on one man alone. Gregg Anderson perceptively remarked, "When Ed was away, the shop went to pieces. When Bob was away, Ed went to pieces. They made a good team." While Ed was a master at the Press, Bob was the great compositor, and together they conceived and created the books. But of course Ed did business his own way, whether in his relations with people or in his making of books. Nothing was done according to rules and regulations and rituals. There was no such thing as laying out of books. They grew in the shop with Ed and Bob and Jane and Sherwood and the others all taking part. Seemingly no one person was responsible. Even every itinerant visitor was listened to as though he had an idea worth hearing on

the subject of the making of the book that was going forward in the shop at that moment. It was a bewildering procedure that often seemed to go two steps back for every one that it went forward, and yet it always resulted in another great book. Each book is a colorful creation in itself, quite unrelated to books that went before or that came after, unless some kind of series was being established, like that of the Japanese print books. But even then each book had its own character and took on its own life. Even in the earliest days the Press never felt under some single influence. As Ed once said, he did not want to own the Kelmscott Chaucer or the Ashendene Dante long, for having "absorbed a lot from them .... I might unconsciously get to copying." So he sold his Kelmscott Chaucer, and bought a Stutz. He never copied anything.

The Grabhorn Press books are not indebted to anybody else in any imitative way, nor is one indebted to another that preceded it. Yet, somehow or another, they are all recognizable as having come from the same shop and through the same minds and eyes and hands. The wonderful variety of styles in the Press publications is indicative of the large personalities of their creators. Ed was never

confined to any limited view of life. Neither he nor his books were ever stylized. Characteristics that most strongly marked the Grabhorns' work are integrity and originality in a design that fits every text. The pages are marked by good black impression and often by strong, clear, large initials or decoration. But one cannot give the same description to all of them when that "all" ranges from the great Leaves of Grass, a magnificent folio with a page size fourteen and a half by nine and a quarter inches, down to the Book of Ruth, a little text only four and a half by three, but possessing great dignity too, even though it is so small that individual letters had to be filed to achieve proper spacing for the five or six words of twelve-point type per line. Yet in its own way the small book is quite as remarkable as the monumental tome. It too possesses a gravity of treatment, rich ornaments, and glowing color. It is an achievement in itself quite as important as the big work. All this is in keeping with what Hazel Dreis, the binder of some of the Press' books, had to tell by way of anecdote. She said that among the visitors there was once a nervous young lady who was appalled to learn that the price of the Cabeza de Vaca was twenty

dollars, this in the 1930's, when twenty dollars was a lot of money indeed. As Hazel tells it, the woman "gasped and said, 'What can possibly be put into a book to make it worth twenty dollars?' Ed got that far-away look and answered, 'Lady, all my heart's blood and my life's best dreams.' She paid and left without a word." The lady was lucky to get the book and so have all of us been lucky to get Grabhorn books. Some of us have been luckier to get to know the creators of the books. The Grabhorn name is honored the world around, wherever men and women appreciate finely made books. Behind it lies the character that we celebrate today. The independence, the integrity, the art and the craft that belonged to Ed Grabhorn. He had a great gusto for life and his books keep that quality alive.

The inscription over the North Door to St. Paul's Cathedral in London, written as a tribute to its architect, Christopher Wren, is also a good one for Ed Grabhorn. Above that portal is inscribed: "Si monumentum requiris, circumspice." Or, in English, "If you seek his monument, look around." The books of the Grabhorn Press are on display around us. They are a living monument to Ed Grabhorn. The spirit that he

and his brother put into them will endure as long as men cherish beauty and art and the honesty of fine craftsmanship.

INDEX

PUBLICATIONS REFERRED TO IN THE INTERVIEW

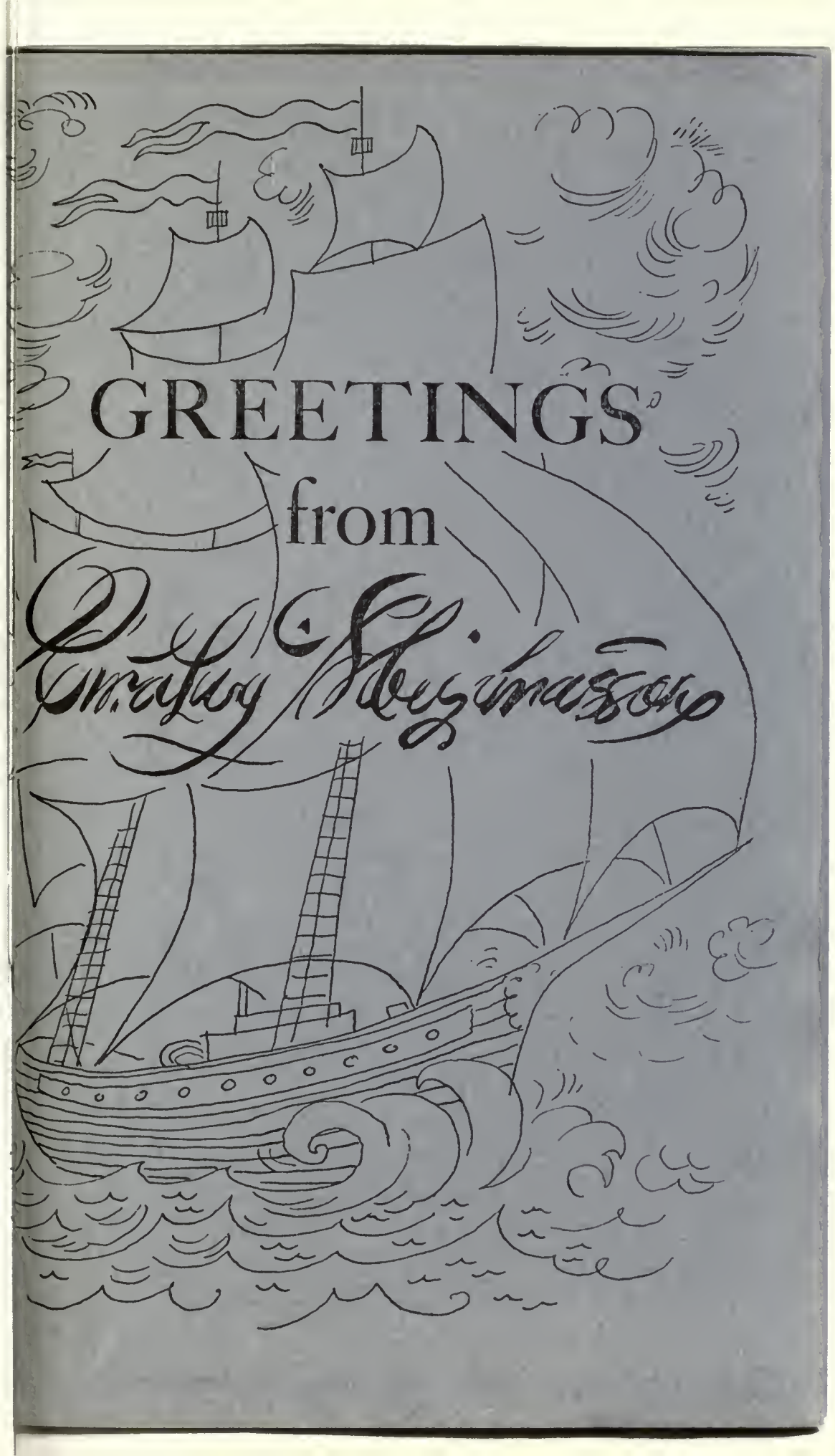
Ruth Teiser

Grew up in Portland, Oregon; came to the Bay Area in 1932 and has lived here ever since.
Stanford, B.A., M.A. in English, further graduate work in Western History.
Newspaper and magazine writer in San Francisco since 1943, writing on local history and economic and business life of the Bay Area.
Book reviewer for the San Francisco Chronicle since 1943.
As correspondent for national and western graphic arts magazines for more than a decade, came to know the printing community.

James D. Hart, 740 San Luis Road, Berkeley, California 94707

These spoiled copies of Hart Press pamphlets were not to be used for regular distribution but in course of time they were added to the Regional Oral History interview simply as illustrations.

James D. Hart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Hayes Jacobs

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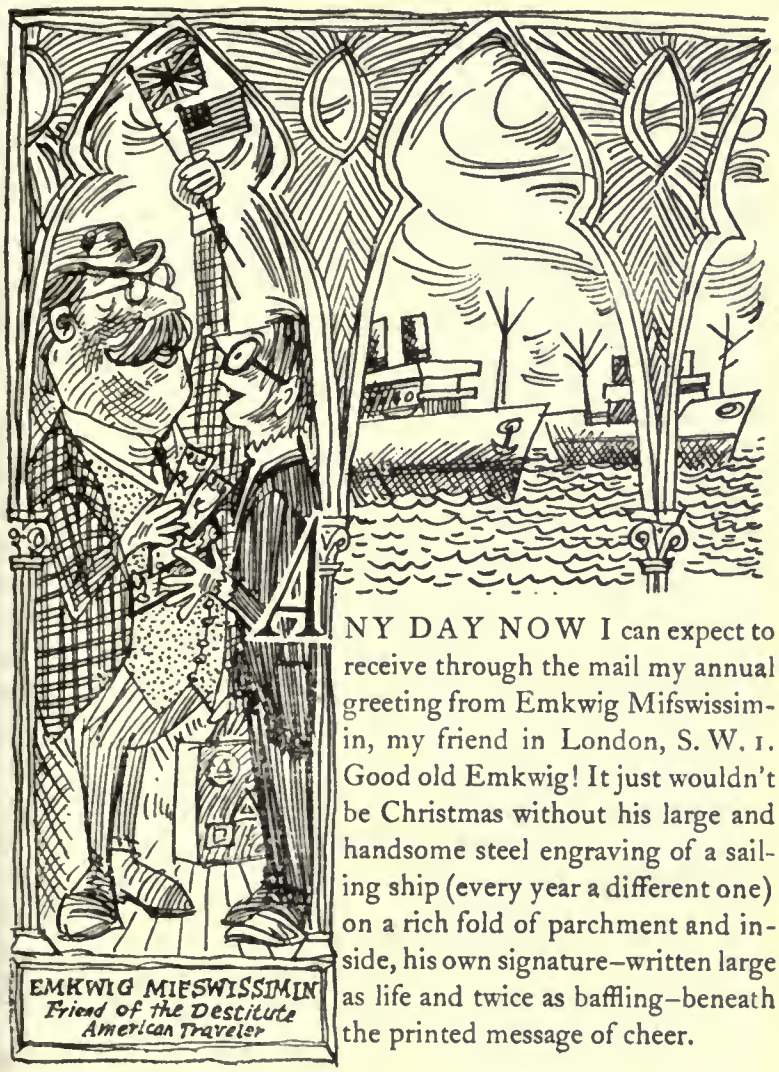


ANY DAY NOW I can expect to receive through the mail my annual greeting from Emkwig Mifswissimin, my friend in London, S. W. 1. Good old Emkwig! It just wouldn't be Christmas without his large and handsome steel engraving of a sailing ship (every year a different one) on a rich fold of parchment and inside, his own signature–written large as life and twice as baffling–beneath the printed message of cheer.

Every Christmas since some time in the middle forties I have had a card from Emkwig. I regret that I did not give him credit for having sent the first one, which, after a hurried glance at the signature, I thought was from Ankwis McSninnimis. Fortunately, though, I saved it, and when the following year Emkwig's card arrived, I realized my mistake.

Emkwig is my only friend in all of London. If I should ever find myself stranded over there without funds I know I could ring him up and quickly arrange for the loan of a few pounds, with no questions asked, and that's the kind of a friend to have. (Emkwig is loaded; those cards he sends must come quite dear.)

A local friend who is a sailing enthusiast was struck immediately by the nautical motif on one of Emkwig's cards. "Say," he said, "here's a beauty. Who sent this one?"

"Emkwig Mifswissimin," I said. "My friend in London."

He flipped the card open and

looked at the signature. "Funny handwriting," he said. I wouldn't take that to be Mifwissimin at all. It looks more like Ontwin Wiltcinnamon to me.

"Well it isn't," I said. "I don't know any Wiltcinnamons. Not well enough, anyway, to get a card from them."

"Wait," he said. "It *isn't* Wiltcinnamon. It's Macintosh. Agrish or Arthur Macintosh. It *looks* like *Arthur.* Yes, that's it! Arthur Macintosh. Maybe it's a men's clothing store, Arthur's Macintoshes."

Nonsense," I said. "My friend is not a place of business. He's a *person.* Emkwig is a rich gentleman with a house in London and a place in the country. His family made its money in shipping, and still has it."

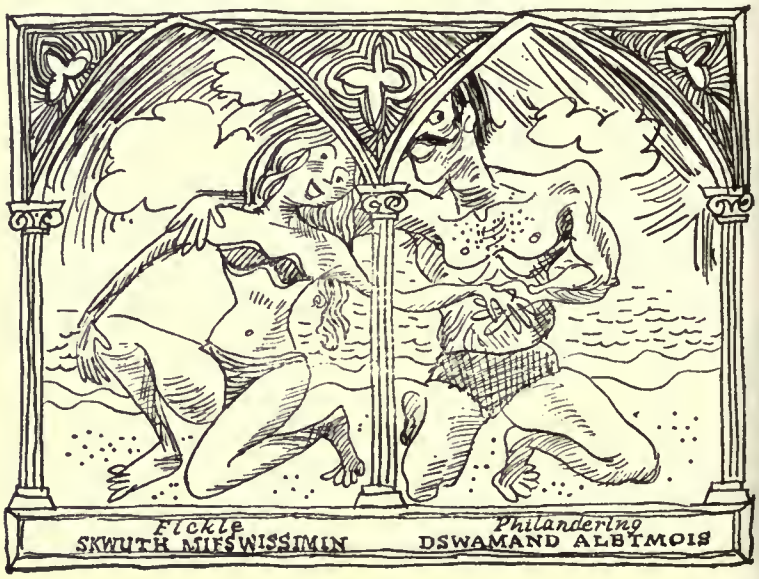
"I never heard of any Mifswissimins in shipping," he said. "I never heard of any Mifswissimins anywhere," he added.

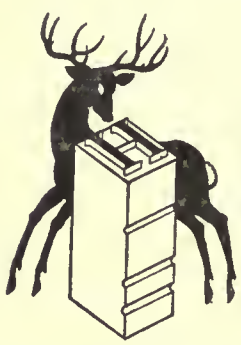
"They're publicity-shy, the Mifswissimins," I said. "Always have been. They stay out of the public eye as far as possible."

It had occurred to me quite early in our relationship that Emkwig must be a bachelor or a widower; otherwise the cards would be from him and his wife: *Emkwig and Dwowty Mifswissimin.* Or *Emkwig and Skwuth.*

No, here was a man alone. If there had ever been a Dwowty or a Skwuth in his life, there was none now. Was she dead, or had she run off to the south of France with a Parisian picture dealer, one M. Dswamand Albtmois? If so, I fancy the only word he has from her now is: "Cheers from Skwuthie and Dswamand." Pretty impersonal.

Cruel Skwuth. Poor Emkwig. If my thoughtful friend in London just once would think to put his return address on the envelope, I would send *him* a card, by air mail. That's how much I think of him.





Illustrated by Victor Anderson, & printed by Ruth and James D. Hart, Berkeley, California, Mcmlxv.